Weight Loss Shakes: The Convenient Lie That Keeps People Sick, Inflamed, and Metabolically Broken

By Joachim Bartoll | Jul. 2nd, 2026

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A recent article on Iron Magazine, by the self-appointed fitness expert Matt Weik, tries to answer whether weight loss shakes are legitimate tools or simply expensive junk. Predictably, the piece takes the safe, middle-of-the-road approach that appeals to the lazy and uninformed. It suggests that these shakes can be perfectly fine as long as they "fit your macros" and help create a calorie deficit. This is not just misleading. It is actively harmful.

This kind of thinking is the nutritional equivalent of telling someone it is acceptable to drink poison, as long as they do it in moderation and stay under their daily "instant death" limit. The article completely ignores the biological reality that ultra-processed shakes filled with seed oils, artificial additives, synthetic vitamins, and low-quality protein isolates create tissue damage (inflammation from active tissue repair,) hormonal disruption, and long-term damage, regardless of whether they might help someone lose a few pounds in the short term.

Biology does not negotiate with spreadsheets. The human body, especially one built as a hypercarnivore, responds to the quality of what it receives, not clever math. Continuing to consume processed garbage while pretending you are making progress is not a strategy. It is self-deception dressed up as practicality.

The article leans heavily on the outdated idea that weight loss ultimately comes down to a simple calorie deficit. This is the same tired, reductionist thinking that

has dominated mainstream nutrition advice for decades. It treats the human body like a basic combustion engine where only the total energy going in versus the total energy going out matters. According to this logic, it does not really matter what you eat, as long as you stay under your daily calorie target.

This view is biologically illiterate. The human body is not a furnace. It is an extraordinarily complex, self-regulating biological system that responds first and foremost to the quality of what you feed it, not just the raw quantity of energy. When you consume ultra-processed weight loss shakes filled with seed oils, artificial sweeteners, synthetic vitamins, emulsifiers, thickeners, and low-quality protein isolates, you are introducing a cocktail of compounds that trigger direct cellular damage (thus inflammation from the repair process,) disrupt hormone signaling, damage the gut lining, and accelerate cellular aging. These negative effects occur regardless of whether you create a calorie deficit that day or eat "clean" during your other meals.

From a biochemical standpoint, these shakes force the body to deal with oxidized fats, foreign additives, and poorly absorbed synthetic nutrients. This creates oxidative stress and low-grade inflammation from wide-spread cellular damage that the terrain must constantly manage. Over time, this ongoing stress impairs mitochondrial function, disrupts insulin sensitivity, and interferes with proper hormone production. None of this is neutralized by simply eating fewer total calories.

A true hypercarnivore physiology does not care about your macro spreadsheet or calorie math. It cares about receiving clean, bioavailable nutrients from animal sources while being protected from the constant assault of plant defense chemicals, oxidized seed oils, and industrial food additives and other unnatural synthetic chemicals. When you continue eating processed junk while trying to lose fat, you are essentially trying to repair a leaking roof while someone is still pouring water through the hole from above. You might see the scale move

temporarily because of the calorie deficit, but the underlying terrain keeps deteriorating. The inflammation, hormonal disruption, and cellular damage continue, often making long-term fat loss harder and overall health worse.

This is why so many people who rely on weight loss shakes or "typical dieting methods" of "calorie counting" eventually regain the weight, often ending up in a worse metabolic state than when they started. The body is not a simple accounting system. It is a living organism that reacts to what it receives at a cellular and hormonal level. Feeding it ultra-processed garbage while hoping the math will save you is not a strategy. It is self-deception. And any dietitian, nutritionist or fitness coach using this methodology should immediately quit their jobs and take up something more appropriate, such as cleaning toilets at summer festival events.

One of the most damaging and intellectually lazy ideas pushed in modern fitness culture is the belief that food quality does not matter as long as it fits your daily macronutrient targets. Articles like the one on Iron Magazine promote this nonsense because it sounds practical and convenient, but in reality it keeps people metabolically broken and trapped in cycles of chronic inflammation (continuous cellular damage) and weight regain.

When someone replaces real, nutrient-dense animal foods with a weight loss shake, they are not simply reducing calories. They are swapping high-quality nutrition for a highly processed product that is biologically foreign to human physiology. These shakes are typically loaded with ingredients that actively work against the body:

- Seed oils promote oxidative stress and chronic low-grade inflammation.
- Artificial sweeteners and chemical additives disrupt the gut microbiome and interfere with insulin signaling.
- Synthetic vitamins force the liver and kidneys to work harder to process and eliminate them, often leaving behind residues that add to the toxic load.

- Low-quality protein isolates are stripped of their natural cofactors and delivered in forms that are far less bioavailable than the complete proteins found in real meat and organs.

Even if these shakes help create a short-term “calorie” deficit, they still increase the overall toxic burden and deepen existing nutrient deficiencies. This is exactly why so many people who rely on meal replacement shakes eventually regain the weight, often ending up in a worse metabolic state than before. Their bodies have been forced to operate under constant inflammatory stress while receiving inferior nutrition, which slows fat loss over time and makes the terrain even more resistant to improvement.

The idea that you can regularly consume toxic, ultra-processed food as long as it “fits your macros” is one of the most destructive concepts in modern nutrition. It gives people false permission to keep harming themselves while pretending they are being strategic. This mindset completely ignores how the body actually works. A hypercarnivore physiology does not negotiate with food diaries or calorie math. It responds to the quality of what it receives at a cellular level. When you continue feeding it industrial garbage, you are not making progress. You are simply managing decline while adding more damage that will need to be repaired later.

Real fat loss and metabolic health require removing the foods that create inflammation and nutrient deficiencies, not finding clever ways to keep consuming them. The “it fits your macros” approach is not a solution. It is a convenient lie that protects the processed food industry while keeping people stuck in the same broken cycle. Again, any coach recommending such nonsense should be on latrine duty for life.

Weight loss shakes do far more harm than most people realize. While they are marketed as convenient tools for fat loss, they actively increase the toxic load on the body, deliver almost no real nutrition, and leave people feeling unsatisfied

and hungry. This combination makes them one of the worst options for anyone trying to improve their health or body composition.

These products increase the overall toxic burden on the liver and detoxification systems. Many weight loss shakes contain emulsifiers, artificial additives, thickeners, and chemical sweeteners that the body must work hard to neutralize and eliminate. Over time, this constant exposure adds to the accumulated cellular damage and thus to chronic low-grade inflammation that drives weight gain, insulin resistance, and hormonal disruption. From a terrain theory perspective, every additional toxin makes it harder for the internal environment to heal and function optimally. The liver, which is already under stress from years of processed foods, now has even more work to do just to keep up.

They also provide very little in the way of true nutrition. The protein in these shakes is often highly processed and missing the full spectrum of amino acids and cofactors found in real animal foods. More importantly, the added vitamins are synthetic and poorly utilized by the body compared to the natural, bioactive forms found in meat and organs. In many cases, these synthetic vitamins are not absorbed at all and simply add to the toxic load as the body attempts to clear them. Biochemistry shows that nutrients from animal sources arrive in the exact forms the body recognizes and can use immediately, while synthetic versions require extra energy to process and leave behind very toxic residues.

Finally, these shakes fail to satisfy the body at a fundamental level. Because they lack the complete nutrient profile of species-appropriate foods, they often leave people feeling hungry or craving more food shortly after consumption. This happens because the body is still signaling for the real nutrients it needs. When those signals are ignored and replaced with processed junk, people tend to overeat later or develop a constant reliance on the shakes themselves just to manage hunger. This creates a cycle where the underlying nutrient deficiencies and metabolic problems are never actually addressed.

In contrast, a hypercarnivore approach using real animal foods provides complete nutrition in forms the body can actually use. When someone eats fatty meat, organs, and bone marrow, they receive the precise combination of proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals needed for metabolic health. This reduces cravings, stabilizes energy, and allows the body to burn fat efficiently without the need for artificial meal replacements or constant hunger management.

The difference is not subtle. One approach adds to the damage while pretending to help. The other removes the damage and gives the body exactly what it needs to heal and function properly.

The article tries to present weight loss shakes as a reasonable tool for busy people who do not have time to prepare real meals. This framing is dishonest because it completely ignores the long-term consequences of relying on processed products instead of learning to properly nourish the body. Convenience is being sold as a solution, when in reality it is just another way to keep people dependent on industrial food and ridiculous diet methods and programs by charlatan coaches while their health continues to decline.

Convenience always comes at a price, and in this case the price is continued chronic inflammation, deepening nutrient deficiencies, and worsening metabolic dysfunction. These shakes force the body to deal with oxidized seed oils, artificial additives, emulsifiers, and synthetic vitamins that it must work hard to neutralize. Over time this adds to the toxic load and keeps the internal terrain in a damaged, inflamed state. People who use these products may see the scale move in the short term because of the energy-intake deficit, but they rarely achieve the deep healing and metabolic flexibility that comes from consistently eating real animal foods. Instead, they often end up regaining the weight while carrying even more inflammation and dysfunction than before.

From a terrain theory perspective, the body cannot properly repair itself when it is constantly being fed substances it was never designed to handle. A

hypercarnivore physiology expects clean, bioavailable nutrients from meat, organs, and marrow. When those are replaced with ultra-processed or plant.based garbage, the terrain remains compromised. The liver stays under stress, the gut lining stays irritated, and the mitochondria continue to operate inefficiently. This is why so many people who rely on meal replacement shakes never reach the level of health and body composition they are aiming for. They are trying to heal while still consuming the very things that created the damage.

The author's willingness to tell clients that these products are acceptable reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of human physiology and biochemistry. A competent coach would never encourage people to consume ultra-processed foods or anything plant-based while claiming to help them get healthy. This approach is not just ineffective. It is actively working against the body's ability to heal and function optimally. It keeps clients dependent on artificial products instead of teaching them how to properly fuel their physiology with species-appropriate foods.

Real metabolic health and lasting fat loss require removing the daily sources of inflammation and nutrient deficiencies, not finding clever ways to keep consuming them under the banner of convenience. The body does not reward half-measures. It either receives the conditions it needs to repair itself, or it continues breaking down under the weight of constant biological mismatch.

Fat loss and lasting metabolic health come from removing the foods that actively damage the terrain and replacing them with the fuel the body was designed to run on. This means centering fatty cuts of meat, organs, bone marrow, and eggs while completely eliminating plant toxins, seed oils, carbohydrates and similar plant-based and processed garbage.

When someone does this consistently, several powerful things happen at once. Chronic inflammation drops significantly because the constant assault from plant defense chemicals, antinutrients, and oxidized seed oils is removed. Insulin

sensitivity improves as blood sugar stabilizes and the body is no longer forced to manage constant glucose spikes. The body becomes highly efficient at burning fat for fuel because it is no longer dependent on managing the damage from carbohydrates. Cravings decrease because nutrient needs are finally being met at a cellular level. Energy becomes steady and reliable without the need for constant snacking or artificial meal replacements.

From a terrain theory perspective, this approach works because it does two essential things simultaneously: it stops adding new damage while supplying the precise raw materials needed for repair. A damaged internal environment cannot heal effectively when it is still being fed the same inflammatory and nutrient-poor foods that created the problems in the first place. Real animal foods provide complete proteins, bioavailable minerals, and the exact fats the body needs for hormone production and cellular function. This combination allows the terrain to strengthen and the body to return to its natural state of efficient energy use and self-regulation.

Strategic fasting can accelerate results when used intelligently. Eating one meal a day or doing a full fast two days per week, while eating to full satisfaction on the other days, creates periods of increased autophagy and fat oxidation without creating nutrient deficiencies or metabolic stress. This approach is simple, effective, and sustainable. There is no constant hunger, no carb cravings, and no loss of energy when the rest of the diet is built on high-quality animal foods.

The idea that you need a special weight loss shake to lose fat is a marketing invention, not a biological necessity. Real food from animals does not need to be engineered, fortified, or processed into powder form. It already contains everything the body requires in the correct forms, ratios, and combinations. The body does not need artificial products to burn fat. It needs the removal of what harms it and the consistent supply of what it was built to thrive on.

Articles like the one on Iron Magazine continue to push the same tired narrative that food quality is secondary to calories and convenience. This thinking has failed millions of people and continues to fail them because it ignores the fundamental mismatch between human biology and modern processed foods.

Weight loss shakes are not a legitimate tool. They are a convenient way to consume more ultra-processed junk while pretending you are making progress. The only sustainable and biologically sound approach is to remove the foods that damage the body and replace them with the animal foods we were designed to eat.

Anything less is just another form of managed decline dressed up as a solution.

Monteiro, C.A. et al. (2019)

Ultra-processed foods: what they are and how to identify them. *Public Health Nutrition.*

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Halliwell, B. (2008)

Are polyphenols antioxidants or pro-oxidants? What does the evidence tell us? *FEBS Letters.*

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Chassaing, B. et al. (2015)

Dietary emulsifiers impact the mouse gut microbiota promoting colitis and metabolic syndrome. *Nature.*

Referenced when discussing how additives and emulsifiers in processed shakes damage the gut and promote inflammation.

Fairweather-Tait, S.J. (1997)

Bioavailability of trace elements. *British Journal of Nutrition.*

Used to highlight the poor absorption of synthetic vitamins and minerals compared to those found in real animal foods.

Phillips, S.M. (2012)

Dietary protein requirements and adaptive advantages in athletes. *British Journal of Nutrition.*

Referenced regarding protein quality and why highly processed protein isolates are inferior to real animal protein.

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The pH Miracle (with modern interpretations linking diet to terrain health and chronic disease).

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Volek, J.S. & Phinney, S.D. (2011)

The Art and Science of Low Carbohydrate Living.

Referenced for metabolic benefits of animal-based, low-carbohydrate diets and improved fat metabolism.

Cordain, L. et al. (2005)

Origins and evolution of the Western diet: health implications for the 21st century. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.*

Used to support the mismatch between modern processed foods and human physiology.

Taubes, G. (2007)

Good Calories, Bad Calories.

Referenced when debunking the calories-in-calories-out model as overly simplistic and biologically inaccurate.

Suez, J. et al. (2014)

Artificial sweeteners induce glucose intolerance by altering the gut microbiota. *Nature.*

Used to explain how artificial sweeteners in weight loss shakes disrupt gut bacteria and insulin signaling.

If you need help with any kind of health problems or transitioning from your current way of eating to our natural species-appropriate, species-specific way of eating, I'm available for both coaching and consultation.

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